

**KETCHIKAN GATEWAY BOROUGH SCHOOL DISTRICT  
BOARD OF EDUCATION  
WORKSESSION and  
FY'23 BUDGET ADOPTION  
Meeting of  
Wednesday, April 27, 2022  
Ketchikan Gateway Borough Assembly Chambers**

**CALL TO ORDER; PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE; ROLL CALL**

The Ketchikan Gateway Borough Board of Education met in a combined worksession/regular session on the 27th day of April, 2022, in the Ketchikan Gateway Borough Assembly Chambers. Board President Stephen Bradford called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

The following members were present to establish a quorum and due notice had been published: Board President Stephen Bradford; Board Clerk-Treasurer Bridget Mattson; and Board Members Diane Gubatayao; Jordan Tabb; Paul Robbins Jr.; and Nicole Anderson. Board Vice President Keenan Sanderson was absent and excused. Student Board Member Braxton Zink was also present.

Administrative staff present included Business Manager Katie Parrott; Interim Superintendent Melissa Johnson; and Board Clerk Kerry Watson.

**CITIZEN REMARKS**

Sarah Campbell said that next year's budget doesn't adequately fund or support the English as a Second Language program at the secondary level. The program and staffing changes will mean the needs of the English Language Learner (ELL) students are not being met; and that violates federal education laws. She asked the Board to look into the program.

Borough Mayor Rodney Dial, stating he was representing himself, asked for clear communication from the district to the Borough, and gave examples. He indicated the district's \$1.1 million "ask" of the Borough to address the district's health insurance pool deficit was going to reoccur, and not be a one-time situation; and that the district needed to be clear about that. Mr. Dial also said the fund was in the red, because of a prior School Board's commitment to health insurance premiums for a bargaining group. He shared his concern that a solution be found without taxing residents.

Czarina Cabillo, introduced herself as a junior at Kayhi, president of the FIL-AM cultural club and an ELL student. She related her experience when she first came to Ketchikan, describing the benefits of being able to meet other new immigrant students in the ESL classroom. She provided a copy of her statement as well as other written comments from fellow ELL students to the Board.

Princess Talinting contrasted her experiences with the ESL classroom when she first arrived in Ketchikan to a year later when there was no longer a classroom. She said she wants incoming student immigrants to have the same kind of initial experience she did.

Dr. Valerie Brooks also addressed the district's ELL program, stating that at the secondary level, it seems that the students' needs are not being met. She read from the district's ELL plan of services, and compared it to what is being planned for the ELL students. Ms. Brooks said the job of the School Board to see that all students are educated; but she added that the current educational model for the ELL students is possibly violating their civil rights.

Justin Breese stated his opposition to the posting of religious statements in district schools, including a tribal values document, which he said included such statements. He spoke about the "reverence for our creator" listed value and read from the Tlingit and Haida Central Council's website regarding stories of creation to support his viewpoint. Mr. Breese said he supports building cultural respect, but doesn't think the tribal values document is the appropriate means by which to do that. He also commented on the district's form on instructional materials, which he'd been provided to address the subject of the tribal values posting in the schools.

Becky King said the school district is using tribal values as posted at the schools as part of the positive behavior support program. Cultural respect should be taught in a different manner, she said; and PBIS should be about behaviors, not values or beliefs.

Clarence Peele, who identified himself as a parent of three children in the school system, and as Tlingit and Haida, said that the tribal values are not religious. He also commented on the Board's meeting agenda template in which the land acknowledgement is given first, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

Erika Angeles said she moved here a year ago and was happy to see an ESL class, as she had attended one in her previous school in California. It helped her survive school, and improved her English, she said. She advocated for ESL to be a full-time class.

### **WORKSESSION**

A motion was made and seconded to enter into a work session. With no objection, the worksession began at 6:36 p.m.

#### **Board Goals and Other Procedural Matters**

The Board discussed the process for Board goal-setting, board evaluations and evaluating the superintendent for about ten minutes. The group came to a consensus to discuss a superintendent evaluation at the second May meeting; and to discuss a board evaluation at the second meeting in June; and to create a sixth-month calendar to take care of these procedural matters.

A ten-minute break was taken before the next worksession topic of the FY '23 operating budget.

#### **FY '23 Operating Fund Budget - Staff Presentation**

Business Manager Katie Parrott provided an overview regarding the FY '23 operating fund budget, summarizing information initially presented at the April 13, 2022 budget presentation. Those points included that:

- It is projected the district would be "down" approximately \$300,000 in its basic entitlement funds;
- In addition to incorporating a \$1.1 million request of the Borough to go towards the health insurance deficit; the budget also incorporates much of the district's fund balance in order to balance the budget (These two factors total \$1.18 million).

Ms. Parrott also noted she had made an adjustment in the utilities line item, between the electric and fuel costs, as electrical costs were somewhat flat, while fuel costs were increasing. She also responded to some of the comments made under citizen remarks, and explained what she had recently reported to the Borough Assembly regarding the district budget and the district's self-insured health insurance pool.

President Bradford addressed some of Mr. Dial's comments, including the funding request regarding the health insurance deficit. Mr. Bradford said he views this as a one-time situation; however, what the future will hold is uncertain.

Ms. Parrott next presented on preparation of the district budget, such as how "staff" is prioritized over "stuff"; the restricted and unrestricted areas of the budget; and incorporating of the school level budgets. For the latter, Ms. Parrott detailed each school's staffing, projected enrollment, and proposed budget, and its increase or decrease from FY 22.

#### **FY 23 Operating Budget - Board discussion**

For about 40 minutes, the Board asked questions and held discussion about the budget. Topics included: a discussion on the ELL program and staffing as raised during citizen remarks; the outlook for education legislation; student activities; and staffing trends that have resulted in increased costs.

The Board came out of worksession at 8:35 p.m. and entered regular session to act on the budget.

**PUBLIC HEARING -BUDGET-** Procedure (1) Citizens may give public comment regarding the subject of the hearing; (2) the public hearing is closed; (3) opportunity for Board discussion and decision.

**Motion to adopt the FY'23 Operating Fund Budget.**

Public Hearing

Rodney Dial said that what he'd just heard in the budget presentation was that changes were needed in the health insurance program, but nothing had been done structurally. Mr. Dial stated that if no structural changes have been made in the district's health insurance pool, why would a change be expected? He warned that with the Board's request of \$1.1 million from the Borough to address that issue, with possibly \$1.1 million next year, the district would be very close to the local funding cap. The district needs to do something about the health insurance program, he stated, adding that it had contracts coming up. Mr. Dial asked that the district's budget information be laid out for the layman. This type of presentation would include: what are the district's total costs this year; what were the total costs last year; what is the student count this year; and what was it last year? he said. Mr. Dial also said that using the terms "flat funding" in reference to the budget was a perspective.

Gabe Asper, English teacher at Schoenbar, commented on his role which also includes teaching ESL students. He described his background and previous experience with ESL students. He spoke about staffing for ESL and the difficulty of addressing the needs of the ESL students, in answer to some questions from Board members. He noted comments about the need for speech pathologists, and said there is also a need for adequate staff for ESL students. Using a paraprofessional to serve ESL students at the secondary level rather than a certified teacher will mean that the students do not have a classroom, said Mr. Asper. He said the program needs a full-time ESL teacher.

**Motion to approve the FY 23 Operating Fund Budget, in the amount of \$42,629,026, in second reading.\***

Moved by: ROBBINS JR; Second by: MATTSON

Board Discussion

Board Member Jordan Tabb said that ELL staffing is not something the Board can address in this budget cycle, but added that it was discouraging that some students' needs aren't being met. He said he hopes the board will continue to look closely at this issue.

Mr. Robbins said he planned to vote in favor of the operating budget, but stated his appreciation for Mr. Dial's testimony and the discussion on the health insurance issue. He said he agreed with the perspective that the board needs to deal with the health insurance program and not kick the can down the road. He asked that the issue be on an immediate agenda for the Board to address the problem rather than the district keep asking for money.

Board Member Mattson stated that suggesting that the health insurance deficit hasn't been addressed isn't factual. She listed the work done by the last health insurance task force, including talking to insurance brokers and scrutinizing the fund and its use by staff. The task force determined it was best to continue being self-insured. She added that gains were being made on the deficit, and then COVID effectively reversed those. Contractually, the district will soon activate another health insurance task force, she said.

Ms. Gubatayao thanked Mayor Dial for coming to the meeting. She commented that other school districts are also struggling with health insurance costs. She stated she would vote for the budget, but has reservations.

**ROLL CALL**

***Student Member Braxton Zink (preferential vote) - AYE***

**TABB, ANDERSON, ROBBINS JR., GUBATAYAO, MATTSON, BRADFORD - ALL AYES**

**MOTION APPROVED**

*\* The operating fund budget as approved is attached to these minutes for reference.*

**BOARD COMMENTS**

Braxton stated that his last meeting would be May 11 as the scholarship assembly occurs on May 25, the date of the second Board meeting.

Mr. Robbins addressed the subject of the tribal values document being brought up at several meetings. He said he planned to submit the subject as an agenda item for a future Board meeting so it could be discussed.

Board Member Nicole Anderson thanked staff for its work on the school district budget and for being able to answer questions on the spot.

Ms. Gubatayao thanked Business Manager Parrott for her budget presentation. She also commented on the difficulty in developing the budget without knowing the student count and its resulting revenue.

Ms. Mattson thanked Mr. Dial for coming to the meeting. She said she appreciates the consideration that the Borough gives to the district and Board when its staff attend their meetings.

Mr. Bradford said the Assembly wants to work with the Board as a team, and that its members have genuine concerns about the future of the school district and its funding.

**ADJOURNMENT**

With no objection to a motion to adjourn, the meeting was adjourned at 9 p.m.

*Minutes approved as distributed at the June 8, 2022 regular meeting of the Board of Education.*

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BOARD PRESIDENT  
Stephen Bradford